

ארבעה ראשי השנה

The Four Jewish New Years

A Mishna Study for Tu Bish'vat

Tractate Rosh HaShana
Chapter 1

מסכת ראש השנה
פרק א'

There are four New Years. On the first of Nisan, the New Year of the Kings and the Pilgrimage Festivals. On the first of Elul, the New Year for the livestock tithe (10% tax). Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shimon say that it falls on the first of Tishrei. On the first of Tishrei, the New Year of the years, the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, the planting and the vegetable produce. On the first of Sh'vat, the New Year of the trees, according to the School of Shammai. The School of Hillel says, on the fifteenth of that month.

א ארבעה ראשי שנים הם. באחד בניסן
ראש השנה למלכים ולקנאים. באחד
באלול ראש השנה למעשר בהמה. רבי
אלעזר ורבי שמעון אומרים, באחד
בתשרי. באחד בתשרי ראש השנה
לשנים ולשמיטין וליובלות, לנטיעה
ולירקות. באחד בשבט, ראש השנה
לאילן, בדברי בית שמאי. בית הלל
אומרים, בחמשה עשר בו:

- 1) On a separate sheet of paper, draw yourself a chart that includes the information on the 4 Jewish New Years. Make one column for the dates and one wide column for what yearly cycle is being renewed or celebrated.
- 2) Why do you think it is necessary to mark a New Year for animals, vegetables, and for trees? (Think about the issue of taxes and how often they are paid)

- 3) The Schools of Hillel and Shammai have an argument in this Mishna. Based on what you know about the Jewish calendar, who won the argument? What is your evidence?